

U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM

EXHIBIT OF BRAILLE
Ralph C. Smith

HV1669
S

HV1669



AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

sent to the Providence, R. I., Chapter by "Bill" Graham, who supports himself in that city with a newspaper, tobacco and candy shop on wheels.

"After all, blindness isn't the disagreeable thing people think it is," he wrote, acknowledging the gift of a book in Braille. "Don't you think our real, true pleasures in life are received by the mind? Don't you think the real pleasure in life is feeling that at bottom our fellow man means good? My so-called affliction opens the roughest hearts to me, and beneath that outer surface shines a beautiful soul. Don't ever let any one tell you blindness is disagreeable. It isn't.

"God bless you women of the Red Cross. By your noble work you are bringing happiness to thousands and making them even more cheerful than they were. Just think, we can sit in our homes, or at our work, and travel mentally over seas and lands, over centuries and through the minds of thousands, thanks to the books we read."

ANOTHER blind man of long experience as a journalist in Mexico and now conducting a Spanish-English school at Tampa, Fla., says of a book: "Nothing that I have read with my fingers has interested me so much." It is Lothrop Stoddard's "Rising Tide of Color" to which he refers—a type of serious book now made available to blind readers. Only the best literature goes into Braille. Transcribing, done as it is on thick sheets in large dotted letters, is bulky. For instance a work like "The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page," which was done recently by the Tuxedo Park, N. Y., Chapter, makes 17 volumes.

Reports for the first three months of this year show that 31,196 pages of Braille have been proof read, with a total of 41 titles and 253 volumes. Besides the much discussed

Chapter; six each by the St. Paul, Minn., and Brockton, Mass., Chapters; five each by the Brooklyn, N. Y., and Winchester, Mass., Chapters; four by the District of Columbia Chapter; two by the Newark, N. J., Chapter; and one each by the Albemarle County, Va., and the Pittsburgh, Pa., Chapters.

These figures do not do justice to those Chapters active in Braille, whose works were read and approved in the period preceding or are now being passed upon in the room for the blind at the Congressional Library. Braille is an expanding activity of the Red Cross. A recent recruit among the Braille workers was Major Gen. David C. Shanks, U. S. A., who took it up while ill in a hospital and is now an enthusiastic transcriber.



HERE is a simple little letter which speaks in volume from the human heart: "I am enclosing a check for \$4 for the work among the victims of the tornado. This money has been sent all the way from Berlin, Germany, for the tornado victims (of whom she had read in the newspapers) by a little crippled school teacher who is herself in severe poverty. She bears her poverty and the strain of hard work in a sweet spirit and even tries to help those worse off than herself. I hope the Red Cross will be able to use the money as she would like. Possibly the incident of the way it was given may forge another link of the chain that shall bind all nations together. Surely the work of the Red Cross is one of the world's great unifiers." The letter comes from Newton Center, Mass., and the spirit it breathes is of itself an additional link in the constantly lengthening chain.

HV1669
5
copy 2

U. S. National Museum Exhibit of Braille

BY RALPH C. SMITH

The Red Cross Courier
May 15, 1925

IN view of the nationwide efforts which the American Red Cross has made in behalf of the blinded soldiers and civilians, it is interesting to note the entrance into the field of another national institution. The United States National Museum at Washington has just installed an exhibit covering the history and the methods by which the blind have been furnished with reading matter. While everyone knows that it is possible for a blind person to read through the sense of touch, the public is now given opportunity of seeing just what has been done and how it has been accomplished.

Situated as the exhibit is in the well known Smithsonian Building, in the nation's capital, means that it will be visited by a great number of people from all parts of the country. The main exhibition is further supplemented through the museum's system of traveling exhibitions. Three such exhibits of graphic arts, which are circulated throughout the country, now show among other processes, the methods of printing for the blind. For those who do not visit the main exhibition there is the possibility of seeing the work thus displayed on a smaller scale.

In arrangement the new exhibition deals with the historical phases of the development of printing for the blind. Through the courtesy of several of the large institutions for the blind a comprehensive showing has been made. These things form a background against which have been projected the story of present-day activity.

The alphabet, in raised characters,

which is the basis of all writing and printing, is shown in its many forms, which have been adopted from time to time. There are also shown the various contrivances and machines for writing these characters, photographed in use. Marked changes in printing methods are illustrated by a group of printing plates of many kinds. Photographs of press room and bindery show the differences between this work and ordinary type printing.

Owing to the keen interest now manifest in the duplicating process which is being evolved through the cooperation of the American Red Cross and other agencies, this method is shown at length. The return of the blinded soldier brought forth countrywide offers of service, particularly from the women of the nation, who through these duplicating methods have accomplished much to supply the demand for all classes of reading matter.

IN the exhibit the Red Cross Volunteer Worker is pictured at her desk-slate or Braille writer, transcribing from the original in ink print. A hand-written sheet comes next, followed by a sheet which has been "processed" or prepared so that it can be printed from upon a press. Then is displayed a finished page, such as are produced in quantities, later to be assembled into completed books for the blind.

To give the uninformed a better idea of the comparative size of a transcription in Braille, a novel of average size was photographed together with the necessary number of volumes in Braille which would con-



Above is pictured a novel in ink-print compared with the same work transcribed in Braille; at the left is shown a Braille worker using the hand slate, and at her side is a Braille writing machine; at the right is a sightless reader of Braille absorbed in his book.

(Photos by courtesy of U. S. National Museum)

tain the same story. Another photograph is that of a blind man in the act of reading from a Braille book. The method of holding the place in the book and of following the rows of raised characters is clearly shown. While the feature which is calculated to be of most practical value in aiding the volunteer in this particular portion of the exhibit, there have also been included numerous other specimens showing how the blind are able to attempt mathematical and musical studies. A few of the many games adapted to the use of the blind are also included.



Our Volunteers in Braille Produce 90 Per Cent of Work

IN all times and among all peoples, the blind have held a warm place in the people's hearts. Yet they have played no small part in developing the arts of song and poetry. Homer was blind. And we have the story of Milton, in his sightless old age, dictating immortal poems to his daughters.

The blind necessarily live in a world of the imagination. So it was a great blessing to them when Louis Braille, a blind Frenchman, devised in 1834 the system of raised dots, read through touch, which now bears his name. Chapters of the Red Cross now produce in the United States more than 90 per cent of the books transcribed into Braille. What this means to the blind is indicated in the following letter sent to the Providence, R. I., Chapter by "Bill" Graham, who supports himself in that city with a newspaper, tobacco and candy shop on wheels.

"After all, blindness isn't the disagreeable thing people think it is," he wrote, acknowledging the gift of a book in Braille. "Don't you think our real, true pleasures in life are received by the mind? Don't you think the real pleasure in life is feeling that at bottom our fellow man means good? My so-called affliction opens the roughest hearts to me, and beneath that outer surface shines a beautiful soul. Don't ever let any one tell you blindness is disagreeable. It isn't.

"God bless you women of the Red Cross. By your noble work you are bringing happiness to thousands and making them even more cheerful than they were. Just think, we can sit in our homes, or at our work, and travel mentally over seas and lands, over centuries and through the minds of thousands, thanks to the books we read."

ANOTHER blind man of long experience as a journalist in Mexico and now conducting a Spanish-English school at Tampa, Fla., says of a book: "Nothing that I have read with my fingers has interested me so much." It is Lothrop Stoddard's "Rising Tide of Color" to which he refers—a type of serious book now made available to blind readers. Only the best literature goes into Braille. Transcribing, done as it is on thick sheets in large dotted letters, is bulky. For instance a work like "The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page," which was done recently by the Tuxedo Park, N. Y., Chapter, makes 17 volumes.

Reports for the first three months of this year show that 31,196 pages of Braille have been proof read, with a total of 41 titles and 253 volumes. Besides the much discussed

life of Mr. Page, there have been made available to the blind such notable books as "Galapagos, World's End," by William Beebe, the writer and naturalist who is now with a scientific expedition in the unexplored Saragossa Sea; "Memories of Travel," by Viscount James Byrce, whose "American Commonwealth" is still the standard popular work on American institutions; the late Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's scholarly "Life of Washington." Fiction is represented by a wide range, some of them classics like Kipling's "Kim" and Conrad's "Youth"; others still discussed like Selma Lagerlof's "The Story of Gosta Berling," and the "Blood and Sand" of Belasco Ibanez. In biography there is Nathaniel Wright Stephenson's intimate study of Lincoln, and E. W. Whiting's book on President Coolidge. Poetry transcriptions have Browning's work at one end and Gilbert's "Bab Ballads" at the other. The variety of titles is indicated by Petrie's "Social Life of Ancient Egypt" and Hodges "Saints and Heroes to the End of the Middle Ages."

Of the volumes proof read and passed by the Director of Braille in the first quarter of this year, 65 volumes were the contribution of the San Francisco, Calif., Chapter; 28 were done by the Tuxedo Park, N. Y., Chapter; 21 by the Chicago, Ill., Chapter; 22 by the New York County, N. Y., Chapter; 15 by the Boston Metropolitan Chapter; 15 by the Utica, N. Y., Chapter; 13 by the Salem, Mass., Branch; nine each by the Baltimore, Md., and Santa Barbara, Calif., Chapters; eight each by the S. E. Pennsylvania and Worcester, Mass., Chapters; seven by the Milwaukee, Wis., Chapter; six each by the St. Paul, Minn., and Brockton, Mass., Chapters; five each by the Brooklyn, N. Y., and Winchester, Mass., Chapters; four by the District of Columbia Chapter; two by the Newark, N. J., Chapter; and one each by the Albemarle County, Va., and the Pittsburgh, Pa., Chapters.

These figures do not do justice to those Chapters active in Braille, whose works were read and approved in the period preceding or are now being passed upon in the room for the blind at the Congressional Library. Braille is an expanding activity of the Red Cross. A recent recruit among the Braille workers was Major Gen. David C. Shanks, U. S. A., who took it up while ill in a hospital and is now an enthusiastic transcriber.



HERE is a simple little letter which speaks in volume from the human heart: "I am enclosing a check for \$4 for the work among the victims of the tornado. This money has been sent all the way from Berlin, Germany, for the tornado victims (of whom she had read in the newspapers) by a little crippled school teacher who is herself in severe poverty. She bears her poverty and the strain of hard work in a sweet spirit and even tries to help those worse off than herself. I hope the Red Cross will be able to use the money as she would like. Possibly the incident of the way it was given may forge another link of the chain that shall bind all nations together. Surely the work of the Red Cross is one of the world's great unifiers." The letter comes from Newton Center, Mass., and the spirit it breathes is of itself an additional link in the constantly lengthening chain.

tain the same story. Another photograph is that of a blind man in the act of reading from a Braille book. The method of holding the place in the book and of following the rows of raised characters is clearly shown. While the feature which is calculated to be of most practical value in aiding the volunteer in this particular portion of the exhibit, there have also been included numerous other specimens showing how the blind are able to attempt mathematical and musical studies. A few of the many games adapted to the use of the blind are also included.



Our Volunteers in Braille Produce 90 Per Cent of Work

IN all times and among all peoples, the blind have held a warm place in the people's hearts. Yet they have played no small part in developing the arts of song and poetry. Homer was blind. And we have the story of Milton, in his sightless old age, dictating immortal poems to his daughters.

The blind necessarily live in a world of the imagination. So it was a great blessing to them when Louis Braille, a blind Frenchman, devised in 1834 the system of raised dots, read through touch, which now bears his name. Chapters of the Red Cross now produce in the United States more than 90 per cent of the books transcribed into Braille. What

life of Mr. Page, there have been made available to the blind such notable books as "Galapagos, World's End," by William Beebe, the writer and naturalist who is now with a scientific expedition in the unexplored Saragossa Sea; "Memoirs of Travel," by Viscount James Bryce, whose "American Commonwealth" is still the standard popular work on American institutions; the late Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's scholarly "Life of Washington." Fiction is represented by a wide range, some of them classics like Kipling's "Kim" and Conrad's "Youth"; others still discussed like Selma Lagerlof's "The Story of Gösta Berling," and the "Blood and Sand" of Belasco Ibanez. In biography there is Nathaniel Wright Stephenson's intimate study of Lincoln, and E. W. Whiting's book on President Coolidge. Poetry transcriptions have Browning's work at one end and Gilbert's "Bab Ballads" at the other. The variety of titles is indicated by Petrie's "Social Life of Ancient Egypt" and Hodges "Saints and Heroes to the End of the Middle Ages."

Of the volumes proof read and passed by the Director of Braille in the first quarter of this year, 65 volumes were the contribution of the San Francisco, Calif., Chapter; 28 were done by the Tuxedo Park, N. Y., Chapter; 21 by the Chicago, Ill., Chapter; 22 by the New York County, N. Y., Chapter; 15 by the Boston Metropolitan Chapter; 15 by the Utica, N. Y., Chapter; 13 by the Salem, Mass., Branch; nine each by the Baltimore, Md., and Santa Barbara, Calif.,

HV1669

S

Smith, Ralph C.
U.S. National museum
exhibit of braille.

Date Due			



